



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Grants awarded for middle school gifted and talented programs**

*Funding will help identify gifted and talented youth from under-represented groups*

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster recently awarded grants to support middle school gifted and talented education to the state's 12 cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

Money for the grants of \$14,000 each was included in the 2005-07 state budget as a new funding initiative sought in Burmaster's education budget request. The Gifted and Talented Education grant program allows the Department of Public Instruction to assist school districts in serving gifted and talented youth in grades five through eight. Grant priorities for this year are to improve schools' ability to plan, conduct, and enhance programs to identify and serve gifted and talented students and to identify and serve students from under-represented groups—such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, or have a disability—who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment and instructional methods.

"Gifted and talented youth are our future entrepreneurs, doctors, civic leaders, and inventors. It is important that our schools identify gifted and talented students during their middle school years when they become more independent learners, especially those from under-represented groups, so they can be valued and supported in the development of their potential," Burmaster said.

Grants will support a number of activities in the CESAs and MPS. Those include

- creating and supporting local cadres of educators and administrators who will lead gifted and talented education initiatives;
- creating and field-testing new ways to identify gifted and talented students in addition to traditional testing;
- providing professional development opportunities for regular classroom teachers on serving gifted and talented students in regular classrooms through strategies such as differentiated instruction; and

(more)

- offering gifted and talented students opportunities for challenging, high-level coursework through distance-learning technologies such as the District Co-op Program developed by the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth. This program brings neighboring districts' gifted and talented students together through online and face-to-face instruction for study of special topics.

“These grants offer important support for middle school gifted and talented education as we strive through our New Wisconsin Promise to provide a quality education for every child,” Burmaster said. “Gifted and high potential youth need challenges that help them extend their understanding, develop their talents, and keep them engaged in their own learning.”

The funds are for the current school year through June 30. CESAs and MPS may reapply for grants in July for the next fiscal year.

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